

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

10/677,958

Examiner

LIN LIU

Applicant(s)

SHOCHET ET AL.

Art Unit

2445

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to 08/25/2010.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-7, 24-28, 44-47, 59 and 61-64.
3. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: ____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

4. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
5. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
- (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
- 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date ____.
- (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date ____.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☒ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date 09/24/2010
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6. ☒ Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date 20100925.
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other ____.

/NIVEK SRIVASTAVA/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 2445

DETAILED ACTION

1. This Office Action is response to Applicants' Amendment filed on 08/25/2010.

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

2. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Stanley D. Ference III (33.879).

3. The application has been amended as follows:

Claim 1. (currently amended), A method comprising:

limiting communication between users in a multi-user communication environment to a menu-driven system ~~of pre-prepared chat messages~~ until an authenticated relationship is established between the users, wherein the menu-driven system is limited to exchange of chat messages selected from a pre-prepared library of chat messages;

receiving a request for a unique code by a first user the multi-user communication environment;

generating the unique code by the multi-user communication environment;

providing the unique code generated by the multi-user communication environment to [[a]] the first user in the multi-user communication environment;

responsive to transmission of the unique code from the first user to a second user via a communication path outside of multi-user communication environment;

receiving the unique code from the second user at the multi-user communication environment;

establishing the authenticated relationship between the first user and the second user in response to receipt by the multi-user communication environment of the unique code from the second user; and

enabling free form communication between the first user and the second user in response to establishing the authenticated relationship between the first user and the second user, wherein the free form communication is not restricted to the pre-prepared library of chat messages, and the free form communication acts as private chat between users having an authenticated relationship only.

Wherein:

~~the authenticated relationship comprises an association of the unique code with the first user and the second user;~~

~~the authenticated relationship is established between the first user and the second user in response to receipt by the multi-user communication environment of the unique code from the second user; and~~

~~the unique code is not transmissible between the first user and the second user via the multi user communication environment.~~

Claim 24. (Currently Amended) A non-transitory computer readable media having instructions for facilitating communication in real-time between users in a multi-user communication environment, the instructions performing steps comprising:

limiting communication between users in a multi-user communication environment to a menu-driven system ~~of pre-prepared chat messages~~ until an authenticated relationship is established between the users, wherein the menu-driven system is limited to exchange of chat messages selected from a pre-prepared library of chat messages;

receiving a request for a unique code by a first user at the multi-user communication environment;

generating the unique code by the multi-user communication environment;
providing the unique code generated by the multi-user communication environment to [[a]] the first user in the multi-user communication environment;

responsive to transmission of the unique code from the first user to a second user via a communication path outside of multi-user communication environment;

receiving the unique code from the second user at the multi-user communication environment;

establishing the authenticated relationship between the first user and the second user in response to receipt by the multi-user communication environment of the unique code from the second user; and

enabling free form communication between the first user and the second user in response to establishing the authenticated relationship between the first user and the

second user, wherein the free form communication is not restricted to the menu-driven system of the pre-prepared library of chat messages, and the free form communication acts as private chat between users having an authenticated relationship only.

wherein:

~~the authenticated relationship comprises an association of the unique code with the first user and the second user;~~

~~the authenticated relationship is established between the first user and the second user in response to receipt by the multi-user communication environment of the unique code from the second user; and~~

~~the unique code is not transmissible between the first user and the second user via the multi-user communication environment.~~

Claim 44. (Currently Amended) A method for initiating free form communication between a plurality of users in a multi-user gaming environment via an exchange of words selected from a menu of predetermined words determined by the gaming environment, the method comprising:

establishing predetermined word communication via an exchange of words selected from the menu between a first user and at least one second user in the multi-user gaming environment, wherein the menu comprises a pre-prepared library of words;

receiving a request for a unique code by the first user from the multi-user gaming environment;

generating the unique code by the multi-user gaming environment;

providing ~~[[a]]~~ the unique code generated by the multi-user gaming environment to the first user in the multi-user gaming environment during the exchange of words selected from the menu of predetermined words between the first user and the at least one second user;

responsive to transmission of ~~transmitting~~ the unique code to the at least one second user via a ~~mode~~ communication path outside of the multi-user gaming environment~~[[:]]~~;

receiving the unique code from the at least one second user at the multi-user gaming environment;

establishing an authenticated relationship between the first user and the at least one second user in response to receipt by the multi-user gaming environment of the unique code from the at least one second user; and

the environment permitting the first and at least second users to thereafter communicate via free form secure communication when the unique code has been authenticated by the multi-user gaming environment, wherein the free form secure communication is not restricted to the menu of a pre-prepared library of words and the free form communication acts as private chat between users having authenticated relationship only.

Claim 59. (currently amended) An apparatus comprising:

one or more processors; and

a computer readable storage medium, in operable connection with the one or more processors, having a program of instructions executable by the one or more processors, the program of instructions comprising:

code configured to limit communication between users in the a multi-user online game to a menu-driven system of pre-prepared chat messages until an authenticated relationship is established between the users, the menu-driven system of pre-prepared chat messages comprising a set of pre-prepared chat messages associated with one or more game actions of the multi-user online game;[[.]]

code configured to receive a request of an unique code by a first user from the multi-user online game;

code configured to generate the unique code by the multi-user online game;

code configured to provide the unique code generated by the multi-user online game to the first user in the multi-user online game;

code configured to receive the unique code from a second user at the multi-user online game;

code configured to enable establishment of the authenticated relationship between users; and

code configured to enable free form communication between the first user and the second user in response to establishing the authenticated relationship between the first user and the second user, wherein the authenticated relationship is established via exchange of the unique code between the users;

wherein the menu-driven system of pre-prepared chat messages prevents transmission of the secret code between the first user and the second user via the multi-user online game.

Claim 60 cancelled.

Claim 61. (currently amended) The apparatus according to claim ~~60~~ 59, wherein the code configured to enable establishment of the authenticated relationship between users further comprises:

code providing a first user the secret code in response to a request of the first user for the secret code; and

code for receiving and authenticating the secret code from the second user.

Reason for Allowance

4. Claims 1-7, 24-28, 44-47, 59 and 61-64 are allowed.

5. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

The prior art of record taking singly or in combination fails to teach or suggest a method comprising: limiting communication between users in a multi-user communication environment to a menu-driven system until an authenticated relationship is established between the users, wherein the menu-driven system is limited to exchange of chat messages selected from a pre-prepared library of chat messages; receiving a request for a unique code by a first user the multi-user communication environment; generating the unique code by the multi-user communication environment; providing the unique code generated by the multi-user communication environment to the first user in the multi-user communication environment; responsive to transmission

of the unique code from the first user to a second user via a communication path outside of multi-user communication environment; receiving the unique code from the second user at the multi-user communication environment; establishing the authenticated relationship between the first user and the second user in response to receipt by the multi-user communication environment of the unique code from the second user; and enabling free form communication between the first user and the second user in response to establishing the authenticated relationship between the first user and the second user, wherein the free form communication is not restricted to the pre-prepared library of chat messages, and the free form communication acts as private chat between users having an authenticated relationship only.

Therefore, the closest prior art of record (i.e: Danieli et al. (Patent no.: US 7,240,093 B1), Yamada et al. (PGPUB: US 2002/0049805 A1), Maehiro (PGPUB" US 2002/0062348 A1) and Harvey et al. (PGPUB: US 2002/0059379 A1)) taking singly or in combination does not teach or suggest these features. Based on this reasoning, claim 1 is allowable over the prior art of record.

The dependent claims bring definite, further limiting, and fully enable by the specification are also allowed.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to LIN LIU whose telephone number is (571)270-1447. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday, 7:30am - 5:00pm, EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Srivastava Vivek can be reached on (571) 272-7304. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Lin Liu/
Examiner, Art Unit 2445

/VIVEK SRIVASTAVA/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 2445